

Sub
EI

[illegible]

A

A

A

sub
4

A

A

7. The method as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 6~~,^{Claim 1} wherein the thickness of the workpiece to be cut is between 1.5 mm and 5 mm.

A₅

8. The method as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~,^{Claim 1} wherein the workpiece to be cut is chosen from plates, sheets and tubes.

A

9. The method as claimed in ~~one of claims 1 to 8~~,^{Claim 1} wherein the nitrogen/oxygen mixture is obtained directly on the site of use from atmospheric air treated by a membrane system.

10. An apparatus for cutting a workpiece made of stainless steel, coated steel, aluminum or aluminum alloy, comprising:

- 15 - at least one laser generator for generating at least one laser beam;
- at least one output nozzle through which said laser beam passes;
- at least one transparent or reflecting optical means for focusing said laser beam; and
- 20 - at least one source of assist gas for said laser beam feeding said output nozzle with assist gas, wherein:
 - the optical means is of the multifocus type, and
 - 25 - the source of assist gas feeds the nozzle with oxygen or with a nitrogen/oxygen mixture, preferably containing at least 90% nitrogen.

Add C8

Add E3